



## Market and Trade Data

### United States Seeded Tops Among Japan's Foreign Suppliers of Planting Seeds

*By Yuichi Hayashi*

Just like last year, Japanese planting seed imports grew in value, totaling \$126.83 million in calendar year 2005, up 5.7 percent from \$120 million the previous year, based largely on gains in the vegetable and herbaceous plant seed categories. The quantity of vegetable, forage, and herbaceous plant seed imports increased 7.9 percent, from 83,427 metric tons in 2004 to 90,037 tons in 2005.

In 2005, the United States ranked tops among Japan's foreign planting seed suppliers by volume (16,351 metric tons), value (\$33.19 million), and market share by value (26.2 percent, up 4.6 percent from the previous year).

Japan's seed exports in 2005 totaled \$91.53 million, down 7 percent from 2004. Japanese exports to the United States totaled \$14.22 million, down 4.7 percent.

#### Legal Restrictions and Producer Protections Gain Ground

In 2006, Japanese efforts to strengthen protections of the rights of its seed growers progressed. On Aug. 1, 2007, MAFF (Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries) will increase seeds and seedlings forbidden from home-breeding for cultivation from 23 to 81 kinds.

A MAFF subcommittee is working to strengthen the punitive clause of the Seeds and Seedlings Act to help Japanese breeders file suit to suspend

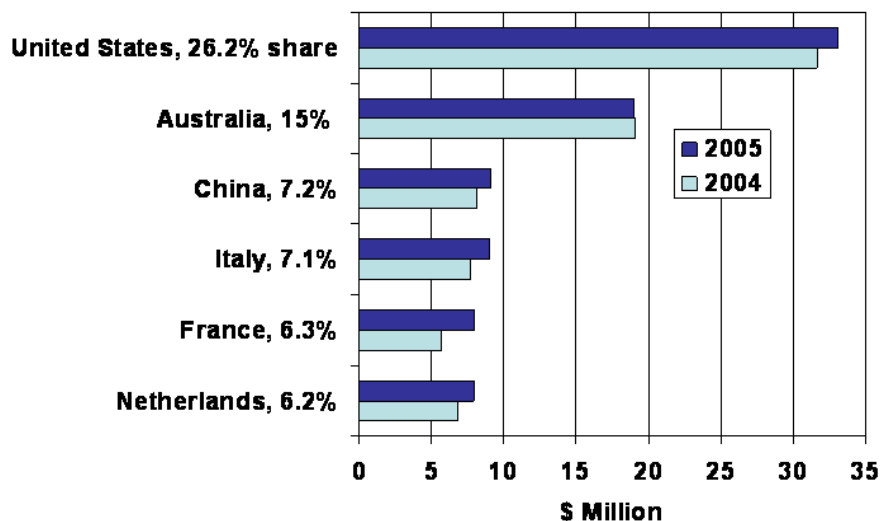
imports of crops that have been unlawfully produced from registered Japanese varieties. The subcommittee plans to compile its report and revise the law in 2007.

These changes mark a continuation of Japan's efforts to tighten requirements for planting seeds. In June 2005, Japan began enforcing two labeling changes under the Seeds and Seedlings Act.

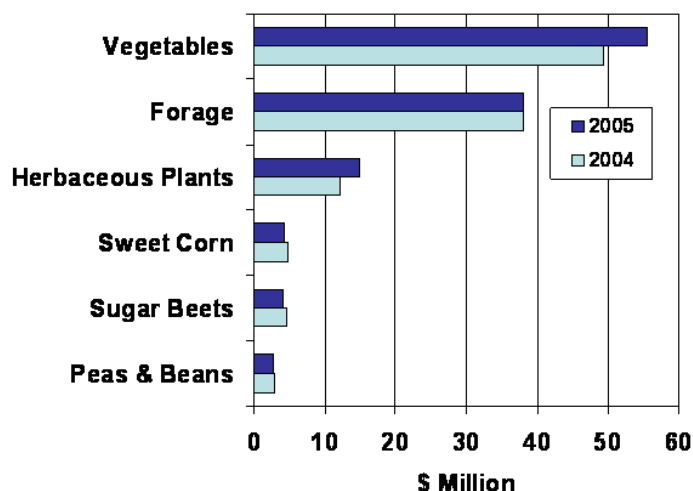
The revisions apply to imports and domestically produced seeds. A couple of the most significant changes can be summarized as follows:

**Expansion of labeling for specified seeds and seedlings:**

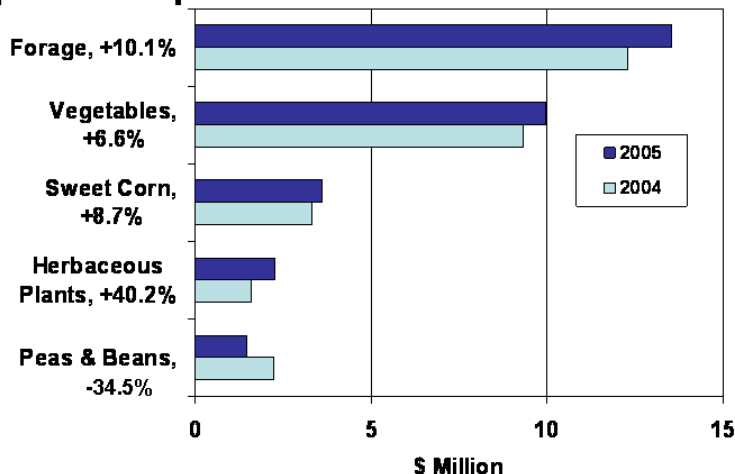
#### The United States Ranks Tops Among Japan's Foreign Seed Suppliers by Value and Market Share



## Vegetables and Forage Account for Most of Japan's Seed Imports from All Countries



## Where's The Growth? A Look at U.S. Seed Exports to Japan



U.S. sugar beet seed exports, although small and therefore not shown on this chart, leaped from \$14,000 to \$74,000 in the period -- up a remarkable 428.6%.

- **Before revision:** A total of 128 kinds of plants important to agricultural production had to be labeled.

- **After revision:** All edible agricultural crops must be labeled.

### Increase of label information on use of agricultural chemicals for specified seeds and seedlings:

- **Before revision:** The names of the agricultural chemicals used to prevent disease and insect damage had to appear on labels.

- **After revision:** Edible seeds of feed crops (excluding fruit trees) on which agricultural chemicals have been applied must have labels that show the active ingredients in the chemicals and the number of times each ingredient was used. Other specified seeds and seedlings are required to show only the names of active ingredients used. ■

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### The Data Is in the Details: Tariff Codes for Planting Seeds in Japan

Due to differences in the way Japan and the United States apply the harmonized system of tariff codes to planting seeds, the trade figures in this article (and FAS Report JA6043, on which it is based) differ from those in FAS BICO (bulk, intermediate, and consumer-oriented product) reports.

The first six digits of the harmonized system are universal standard codes, but the rest vary by country. Japan uses nine-digit codes, while the United States uses ten-digit codes. BICO reports provide trade data on planting seeds based on six seed groups, each of which represents a total of the individual commodities, based on the harmonized system of codes.

### e-Sources

Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries has an English website of plant variety protection that provides the law and government ordinances, an institutional outline, and documents required for application:

<http://www.hinsyu.maff.go.jp/english/index.htm>

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